

Keynote Workshop: Mindfulness & Buddhist Principles in Counselling & Psychotherapy

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Bio: Marco Mascarin MA, PhD (candidate) is the co-director and one of the core faculty of the Inter-professional Applied Mindfulness Program at the Faculty of Social Work at University of Toronto and co-director of the Applied Mindfulness program at McMaster University Health Sciences. Marco is the co-founder and co-director of the Institute of Traditional Medicine in Toronto, where he produces educational forums on health and spirituality and co-initiated Canada's first Contemplative End of Life Care program. Marco serves as a Buddhist Chaplain at the UofT Multi-Faith Centre and is currently completing his PhD in Creative Systemic Studies. Marco combines his

extensive knowledge in fine arts, counselling, and eco-theology with more than twenty years of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist practice and training. Marco is also a Grief and Trauma Counsellor and Meditation Teacher, and maintains a private practice which integrates Mindfulness with Psychotherapy. He has produced dozens of nationally broadcast documentaries for the CBC about spirituality and contemporary visionaries.

Workshop Abstract:

Why has a 2500 year old practice captured the attention of neuroscience, psychotherapy, education, the arts, business and other disciplines? Perhaps, because Mindfulness signals a paradigm shift in mental health, as emphasis is placed on the relationship that we cultivate to the mental-emotional contents of awareness and less on the content itself.

The Buddhist context out of which Mindfulness arises, presents a process view of personhood, wherein individuals learn to directly experience the fluid nature of emotions, sensations and various mental states. Through Mindfulness practice, one learns to be aware of experience without judgment and to cultivate the qualities of equanimity and compassion towards what arises moment to moment in awareness.

This training is an opportunity to learn the history (ancient and contemporary), concepts, purposes and some of the Mindfulness-based interventions used personally and clinically: seated meditation, body scan, metta, and mindful movements. The emphasis will be on integrating the aforementioned non-judgmental awareness into our personal and professional lives.

Before introducing these practices clinically, it is necessary to have personal experience, over an extended period of time with formal meditation, as such, this training will present the basic skills necessary to commence a daily Mindfulness routine and direct individuals to appropriate resources.